

V. COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

A. AGENCY COORDINATION

Coordination with regulatory and resource agencies occurred throughout the planning of the project. The two most notable formats for agency coordination were early coordination letters and presentations and discussions at the monthly MDOT interagency meetings.

At the beginning of the study, early coordination letters were mailed to various federal, state, regional, and local agencies and special interest groups in accordance with the procedural provisions of the NEPA and the FHWA's and MDOT's requirements for early coordination. Early coordination letters, accompanied by a map of the study area, a project description, and a plan of study, were mailed to 30 agencies and special interest groups in July 1997 to notify them of the proposed project, request specific information, and encourage participation in the study by identifying areas of initial concern (Table V-1, page V-7). Copies of responses received are included at the end of this section. Letters were also received from the Town of New Gloucester and the Growth Council of Oxford Hills (copies are included at the end of this section).

This project was presented on six occasions to the attendees of the monthly interagency meetings.

- In October 1996, a project introduction and overview were presented.
- In February 1997, the project purpose and needs, an overview of the environmental features in the study area, and preliminary alternatives were presented. The agencies present concurred with the project purpose and needs.
- In June 1997, the various highway components were presented along with the rationale for eliminating two of the components from further study. The agencies present concurred with the conceptual range of alternatives and eliminating the two components from further consideration.
- In September 1997, the fourth interagency meeting was held; this meeting was a field visit to the study area. The purposes of this meeting were to review and confirm the boundaries for wetlands and waterways in the study area, to review the preliminary environmental impacts from the build alternatives under consideration using the U. S. Army Corps of Engineer's — New England Division's Highway Methodology, and to review the overall status and schedule for the proposed project. The agencies present concurred with the boundaries delineated for wetlands and waterways in proximity to the build alternatives with one exception: the boundary of one wetland was revised to incorporate the area along

the toe of the slope adjacent to a portion of Pond Road. No comments were received concerning the preliminary environmental impacts from the build alternatives under consideration.

- In March 1998, an update of the project was presented. This update included the results of the avoidance and minimization measures and efforts, the results of the PAC meetings since September 1997, and the preliminary results of the social impacts assessment. The discussions included whether alternatives should be retained through detailed studies or dismissed. It was agreed that Alternative 1 should be dismissed because it did not satisfy the project needs of safety, traffic, noise, the protection of water quality, or the protection of the Shaker Village. It was agreed that Alternatives 3, 3A, and 3B should be dismissed because they did not satisfy the project needs of safety, noise, or the protection of water quality. The remainder of the Alternatives should be carried through detailed studies and presented in the EA for consideration.
- In May 1998, updated materials describing impacts to the natural environment, impacts to the social environment, and costs of the build alternatives were presented. The agencies concurred with the dismissal of five alternatives (the No-build, 4, 4D, 5, and 5A), and carrying Alternatives 4A and 4E through detailed studies.

B. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public participation was initiated early in the study to incorporate public comments and concerns into the development and analysis of the project needs, alternatives, potential resultant environmental impacts, and the development of conceptual mitigation measures. Public participation was continued throughout project development. The public involvement program included three primary components: the meetings of the PAC, meetings with the Towns of Poland and New Gloucester, and the public meetings leading to the circulation of the DEA. Additionally, a meeting was held with one special interest group—the Sabbathday Lake Association. A public hearing was held following the circulation of the DEA / Section 4(f) Statement.

1. Project Advisory Committee

At the outset of the development of the project, the PAC, consisting of officials from the Towns of Poland and New Gloucester, the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (COG), the Greater Portland COG, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC), and private citizens, was formed (Appendix C).

- An initial organizational meeting of the PAC was held on November 18, 1996. The purposes of the meeting were to introduce the study team participants, review the studies to be performed, review the roles of the PAC, and review the public participation phase of the project.

- The second PAC meeting was held on December 9, 1996. The purposes of this meeting were to review NEPA and its requirements and limitations, review other laws to be considered during the planning of the project (e.g., Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act), and to formulate initial goals and objectives for the project. Thirty goals and objectives were identified.
- The purpose of the third PAC meeting on January 24, 1997 was to review and prioritize the goals and objectives identified at the December meeting. The 30 goals and objectives were ranked in an order of importance for further discussion and consideration.
- The purposes of the fourth PAC meeting on February 3, 1997 were to review the discussions that took place at the first public meeting (Section B-2, Public Meetings), review the prioritized goals and objectives from the previous meeting (particularly the top ten goals and objectives), and to review the relevant environmental resources identified in the study area.
- The fifth PAC meeting held on March 3, 1997 was dedicated to a discussion of project funding and the results of the interagency meeting on February 11, 1997, where the environmental resources in the study area were reviewed. The project purpose and needs statement from which alternatives would be developed and measured was also reviewed. Five broad corridors were identified.
- The sixth PAC meeting was held on May 12, 1997. The purposes of this meeting were to review and discuss the various highway components and alternatives developed to date. Two highway components were dismissed from further consideration. An eastern bypass of the Shaker Village was dismissed because (1) other alternatives exist with fewer impacts to the Shaker Village and (2) opposition concerns from the Shaker Village including the potential visual impacts, and (3) impacts to the water quality of Sabbathday Lake. A westerly bypass within the southern portion of the study area was dismissed because the future grades of this roadway would exceed design criteria.
- The purposes of the seventh PAC meeting on July 14, 1997 were to review and discuss the information from the second public meeting held on June 25, discuss the continued development of the truck climbing lanes and intersections of the various build alternatives and segments under consideration, and provide a detailed description of the environmental studies to be performed.
- The eighth PAC meeting on September 8, 1997, was dedicated to a discussion of the preliminary results of the environmental studies performed to date. It was acknowledged that Alternatives 2 and 3, bypasses of Sabbathday Lake and Shaker Village respectively, with their

modifications, do not satisfy all of the project needs. The alternatives under consideration were discussed in the regulatory context of NEPA and the permitting requirements.

- On October 14, 1997, a field walk for PAC members was held. PAC members toured the areas of the proposed build alternatives and portions of existing Route 26.
- The ninth meeting of the PAC was held on November 10, 1997. The purposes of the meeting were to review and clarify the role of the Route 26 PAC, review and clarify the role of the Route 26 study team, and review the next few steps as this project moves forward through the project development process.
- The tenth PAC meeting was held on November 24, 1997. The items discussed at the meeting included a description of design activities, an update of the matrix of impacts to the natural environment, and a description of preliminary impacts to the social environment.
- The eleventh PAC meeting was held on March 2, 1998. The items discussed at the meeting included the results of the avoidance and minimization measures and the changes made to the build alternatives, the remainder of the preliminary results of impacts to the social environment, and a discussion of the build alternatives to be retained through detailed studies and alternatives to be dismissed. The PAC concluded that Alternatives 1, 2A, 4A, and 4E should be retained through detailed studies. Alternative 1 would provide a basis of comparison to the other build alternatives, although it was acknowledged that Alternative 1 did not satisfy the majority of the project needs. It was suggested that the remainder of the build alternatives be dismissed because they resulted in either more residential displacements than the other alternatives retained, were more intrusive than the other alternatives retained, or both.
- The twelfth PAC meeting was held on June 29, 1998. The purposes of the meeting were to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Alternatives 5 and 5A, the reasons for their original dismissal from further consideration by the PAC, and whether they should be retained for further consideration.
- The thirteenth meeting of the PAC was held on August 10, 1998. The purposes of the meeting were to review the DEA / Section 4(f) Statement that was circulated for comment, and to prepare for the public hearing.
- The fourteenth PAC meeting was held on November 7, 1998 following the public hearing. The purposes of the meeting were to review the comment received on the DEA / Section 4(f) statement and discuss the schedule for final plan development and construction.

2. Public Meetings

Two public meetings were held during the preliminary engineering and environmental studies portion of the proposed project.

The first public informational and scoping meeting was held on January 15, 1997. The presentation included an introduction of the study team and PAC members, an overview of the project, a review of the NEPA process and how this project fits within that process, and a review of the 30 goals and objectives identified by the PAC. The opportunities for public involvement were identified.

The second public meeting was held on June 25, 1997. The discussions included an overview of the project including its history, a review of the top ten goals and objectives and the approved project purpose and needs statement, and a review of the build segments and alternatives developed.

3. Town Meetings

Meetings were held with the Town of Poland and the Town of New Gloucester during the planning of the project.

A meeting with the Town of Poland was held on March 3, 1998. A summary of the proposed project was presented to the Board of Selectmen followed by a question and answer session. Questions included the amount of right-of-way to be acquired and the impact of the project on the adjacent landowners, particularly those in proximity to the truck climbing lanes.

A meeting with the Town of New Gloucester was held on March 23, 1998. A summary of the proposed project was presented to the town councilmen, four members of the PAC, and the public. Questions and points of discussion included the maintenance and maintenance costs of the portions of existing Route 26 that would revert to the Town, if portions of existing Route 26 could be removed and replaced in part with cul-de-sacs, and if individual driveways could be moved from the existing Route 26 to the bypass alternatives. MDOT will pave Pond Road between existing Route 26 and a new intersection created between a bypass alternative and Pond Road.

The second meeting with the Town of New Gloucester was held on June 22, 1998. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Alternatives 5 and 5A and if these alternatives should be considered further through detailed studies in the EA. It was agreed that the Selectmen should attend the next PAC meeting to discuss retaining Alternatives 5 and 5A for further consideration.

At the Selectmen's meeting on July 6, 1998, the comments and recommendations presented at the June 29 PAC meeting were reviewed and discussed. After listening to the comments presented by the public at this meeting, the Selectmen voted to accept the recommendations of the PAC.

4. Sabbathday Lake Association Meeting

A meeting with one special interest group, the Sabbathday Lake Association, was held on August 25, 1997. The purposes of the meeting were to hear the concerns of the Sabbathday Lake Association, with respect to water quality, and for MDOT to describe the water quality studies to be performed.

5. Public Hearing

The public hearing for the proposed project was held on August 24, 1998. The hearing consisted of a brief presentation followed by verbal testimony from members of the public. The presentation consisted of introductions of the speakers and study team and responsibilities, a brief review of the DEA and the importance of public involvement component, a review of the history of the project, an overview of the project purpose and needs and alternatives analysis process, and a description of the right-of-way appraisal and acquisition process.

Twenty people offered comments at the public hearing. The comments, in general, included: impacts to historic resources potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the ramifications to individuals if their lots were reduced in size where they would no longer conform with the zoning regulations of the Town of New Gloucester, increases in noise levels, the decrease in the value of individual properties following right-of-way acquisition, and the potential impacts to ground-water quality and quantity.

A representative of the PAC gave a synopsis of the PAC process and stated that the PAC had reached a consensus in favor of Alternative 4E, pending public input. The PAC's performance criteria used in reaching this decision were safety, protection of resources, preservation of landmarks and minimizing displacements.

The Town of New Gloucester Board of Selectmen supported the PAC's recommendation of Alternative 4E.

The comments received at the public hearing and during the comment period were reviewed and considered during the preparation of this Final EA/Section 4(f) Statement. The potential impacts to historic resources were reviewed and additional coordination was performed with the SHPO. Following additional coordination with the SHPO, the Marston property was no longer considered as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Town of New Gloucester stated that owners of individual properties that would be non-conforming with the Town's zoning ordinance would be granted an exclusion and permitted to continue living on their properties as the reduction in their lot size was through no action on their own part.

MDOT will consider the decrease in the value of individual properties during the right-of-way acquisition process and a preconstruction well survey for ground-water quality and quantity would be performed.

Table V-1, Summary of Early Coordination Letters

Agency	Information Requested	Information Received
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers	General letter requesting comments	No response received
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Federally-listed or proposed threatened or endangered species or known critical habitats in the study area	No known federally-listed or proposed threatened or endangered species exist in the study area, with the exception of occasional, transient species
U. S. Department of Agriculture	General letter requesting comments	No response received
U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service	Comments concerning the Shaker Village, a National Historic Landmark	No response received
U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance	General letter requesting comments	No response received
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency	General letter requesting comments	No response received
National Marine Fisheries Service	General letter requesting comments	No response received
Maine Office of the Governor	General letter requesting comments	No response received
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries	State listed or proposed threatened or endangered species, known critical habitats, or other sensitive features or concerns	No known rare, threatened or endangered species exist in the study area
Maine DEP-Air Quality Control	General letter requesting comments	No response received
Maine DEP-Land Quality Control	General letter requesting comments	No response received
Maine DEP-Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management	Known or potential areas of hazardous waste or materials and past or future remedial actions	File search should be performed by others
Maine DEP-Environmental Priorities	General letter requesting comments	No response received
Maine Geologic Survey	Location of groundwater wells and groundwater quality	Location of groundwater wells
Maine DOC-Forest Service	General letter requesting comments	No response received
Maine DOC-Bureau of Parks and Lands	Identification of parks, recreation areas, or lands purchased with funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund	No recreation sites under the restrictions of federal 6(f) regulations exist in the area
Maine State Planning Office	General letter requesting comments	Flood Insurance Rate Maps and FEMA studies for the area
Maine Natural Areas Program	State listed or proposed threatened or endangered species, critical habitats, or other sensitive features or concerns	No known rare plants exist within the study area
Maine Department of Economic and Community Development	Floodplain and flood hazard of flood prone areas	No response received
Maine Department of Agriculture	General letter requesting comments	No response received
Maine Department of Marine Resources	General letter requesting comments	No response received

Table V-1, Summary of Early Coordination Letters (cont.)

Agency	Information Requested	Information Received
PACTS	General letter requesting comments	No response received
Maine Turnpike Authority	General letter requesting comments	MTA continues to monitor the Route 26 project and suggested continued sharing of information
Town of Poland	General Letter requesting comments	No response received
Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments	General letter requesting comments	No response received
United Society of Shakers	General letter requesting comments	No response received *
Maine Audubon Society	General letter requesting comments	No response received
Sabbathday Lake Association	General letter requesting comments	Water quality is the primary concern; design structures to reduce the future phosphorous loading to Sabbathday Lake

* The Shaker community was active on the PAC and participated throughout project planning.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New England Field Office
22 Bridge Street, Unit #1
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-4986

August 15, 1997

William Plumpton
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
P.O. Box 67100
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7100

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

This responds to your letter dated July 15, 1997 for information on the presence of federally-listed and proposed, endangered or threatened species in accordance with the proposed construction of improvements to Route 26 in New Gloucester and Poland, Maine.

Based on information currently available to us, no federally-listed or proposed, threatened and endangered species under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are known to occur in the project area, with the exception of occasional, transient bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) or peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*).

Preparation of a Biological Assessment or further consultation with us under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required. Should project plans change, or additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

A list of federally-designated endangered and threatened species in Maine is enclosed for your information. Thank you for your cooperation and please contact Linda Welch of our Maine Field Office at 207-827-5938 if we can be of further assistance regarding endangered species.

Sincerely yours,

Michael J. Bartlett
Supervisor
New England Field Office

Enclosure

FEDERALLY LISTED ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES
IN MAINE

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Distribution</u>
FISHES:			
Sturgeon, shortnose*	<u>Acipenser brevirostrum</u>	E	Kennebec River & Atlantic Coastal Waters
REPTILES:			
Turtle, leatherback*	<u>Dermochelys coriacea</u>	E	Oceanic summer resident
Turtle, loggerhead*	<u>Caretta caretta</u>	T	Oceanic summer resident
Turtle, Atlantic ridley*	<u>Lepidochelys kempii</u>	E	Oceanic summer resident
BIRDS:			
Eagle, bald	<u>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</u>	T	Entire state-nesting habitat
Falcon, American peregrine	<u>Falco peregrinus anatum</u>	E	Current nesting: Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Oxford, & Franklin Counties; entire state-migratory
Falcon, Arctic peregrine	<u>Falco peregrinus tundrius</u>	T	Entire state migratory- no nesting
Plover, Piping	<u>Charadrius melodus</u>	T	Atlantic coast
Roseate Tern	<u>Sterna dougallii dougallii</u>	E	Atlantic coast
MAMMALS:			
Wolf, eastern timber	<u>Canis lupus</u>	E	Somerset
Cougar, eastern	<u>Felis concolor cougar</u>	E	Entire state-may be extirpated
Whale, blue*	<u>Balaenoptera musculus</u>	E	Oceanic
Whale, finback*	<u>Balaenoptera physalus</u>	E	Oceanic
Whale, humpback*	<u>Megaptera novaeangliae</u>	E	Oceanic
Whale, right*	<u>Eubalaena spp. (all species)</u>	E	Oceanic
Whale, sei*	<u>Balaenoptera borealis</u>	E	Oceanic
Whale, sperm*	<u>Physeter catodon</u>	E	Oceanic
MOLLUSKS:			
NONE			
PLANTS:			
Small Whorled Pogonia	<u>Isotria medeoloides</u>	T	York, Kennebec, Cumberland, Oxford Counties
Lousewort, Furbish's	<u>Pedicularis furbishiae</u>	E	Aroostook County
Orchid, Eastern prairie fringed	<u>Platanthera leucophaea</u>	T	Aroostook County

* Except for sea turtle nesting habitat, principal responsibility for these species is vested with the National Marine Fisheries Service



ANGUS S. KING, JR.

GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
INLAND FISHERIES & WILDLIFE
284 STATE STREET
41 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0041

RAY B. OWEN, JR.

COMMISSIONER

August 5, 1997

William Plumpton
Gannett Fleming
P.O. Box 67100
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7100

Re: Wildlife Habitat Information, Route 26 Corridor, New Gloucester and Poland, Maine

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter sent to Mr. Michael Thompson of Woodlot Alternatives regarding threatened, endangered, and special concern species within the study area. No additional records have been obtained since that time. Our latest records of deer wintering areas and identified wetlands are also contained within the Report BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY FOR ROUTE 26 (PIN 3517.20) NEW GLOUCESTER-POLAND, MAINE. This report was prepared by CID and submitted to the Maine Department of Transportation in March 1997. I hope this information serves your needs.

If you have additional questions, feel free to contact me at 207 657-3258.

Sincerely,

Warren Eldridge
Asst. Regional Wildlife Biologist
358 Shaker Road Gray, Maine





ANGUS S. KING, JR.
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
INLAND FISHERIES & WILDLIFE
284 STATE STREET
41 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0041

RAY B. OWEN, JR.
COMMISSIONER

November 21, 1996

Michael Thompson
Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.
132 Main Street No. 3
Topsham, Maine 04086

Re: Habitat Maps for Route 26 Corridor Study

Dear Michael:

Enclosed please find copies of our habitat maps for the study area. I believe these maps cover most the area of concern. I also checked our most recent BCD maps for any rare, threatened and endangered species records. While none were found within the study area, we do have records of a wood turtle, special concern, in the vicinity of Lily Pond, New Gloucester.

If you have any questions or need additional information on individual habitats, feel free to contact me at 657-3258.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Warren Eldridge", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Warren Eldridge
Asst. Regional Wildlife Biologist
358 Shaker Road, Gray



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0022

ANGUS S. KING, JR.
GOVERNOR

RONALD B. LOVAGLIO
COMMISSIONER

July 21, 1997

William M. Plumpton
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
P.O. Box 67100
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
17106-7100

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

Thank you for including me in your request for information pertaining to the Environmental Assessment of the proposed construction of improvements to Route 26, Gray, Maine. Our office has surficial geology maps (Surficial Geology of the Gray 15-minute Quadrangle, Open-File No. 76-45), as well as aquifer maps (Open-File No. 85-82c) that may provide you with necessary information for your study. These maps may already be available through the Maine Department of Transportation and you may already have them. However, if you do not, I provide our publications catalogue for your information.

Along with several other colleagues mapping in adjacent areas, I have been mapping the surficial geology of the Gray 7.5-minute quadrangle to upgrade the old 15-minute quadrangle. These maps are not published yet, but may be available late this fall. However, I can provide you with information on the Gray delta if the above maps do not serve as adequate baseline data for your work.

Adequate water quality protection for both surface and ground water, particularly for the Sabbathday Pond drainage basin and the portion of the Gray delta which Route 26 crosses in the study site are the geologic issues that I would urge your attention be focused upon.

Again, if the above maps do not provide you with the information necessary to the needs of your evaluation, feel free to contact me (207-287-7170).

Sincerely,

Thomas K. Weddle





STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

ANGUS S. KING, JR.
GOVERNOR

EDWARD O. SULLIVAN
COMMISSIONER

July 25, 1997

Mr. William M. Plumpton
Project Manager
Gannett Fleming Engineers
P.O. Box 67100
Harrisburg, PA. 17106-7100

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter to the Department requesting a file search for the purposes of your firm conducting a site assessment of the Route 26 corridor project in Gray and New Gloucester, Maine. After discussing this request with Dale Doughty of MDOT, it is my understanding that the file search will be conducted by MDOT staff or yourselves as is the usual practice.

For your information in the future, the Department and the Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management makes its files available to the public for file searches for site assessments and other purposes. We, however, do not conduct file searches as a service. That is the responsibility of the user. Files are available by appointment with our file room personnel (287-7843).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (287-7166).

Sincerely,

George Seel
Director of Technical Services

cc: Dale Doughty, MDOT

AUGUSTA
17 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0017
(207) 287-7688
RAY BLDG., HOSPITAL ST.

BANGOR
106 HOGAN ROAD
BANGOR, MAINE 04401
(207) 941-4570 FAX: (207) 941-4584

PORTLAND
312 CANCO ROAD
PORTLAND, MAINE 04103
(207) 822-6300 FAX: (207) 822-6303

PRESQUE ISLE
1235 CENTRAL DRIVE, SKYWAY PARK
PRESQUE ISLE, MAINE 04769-2094
(207) 764-0477 FAX: (207) 764-1507



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0022

ANGUS S. KING, JR.
GOVERNOR

RONALD B. LOVAGLIO
COMMISSIONER

July 21, 1997

William M. Plimpton
Project Manager
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
P.O. Box 67100
Garrisburg, PA 17106-7100

Dear Mr. Plimpton:

After reviewing the information you sent regarding the proposed reconstruction of Route 26 in the Gray-New Gloucester area, it appears to me there are no recreation sites under the restrictions of federal 6(f) regulations in the area.

I assume you will be contacting the local communities to determine if there are any local parks or recreation facilities under their jurisdiction.

Sincerely yours,

Mike Gallagher, Manager
Grants & Community Recreation



State Planning Office
184 State St. 38 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Tel: (207) 287-8050 Fax: (207) 287-6489

Date: 7/25/97
To: William Plimpton, Gannett Fleming
PO Box 67100 Engineers & Planners
Harrisburg PA 17106-7100
From: Sue Baker / Lou Sidell

<input type="checkbox"/> Approval	<input type="checkbox"/> Comment
<input type="checkbox"/> Signature	<input type="checkbox"/> Note & Return
<input type="checkbox"/> Your information	<input type="checkbox"/> Per Conversation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> As Requested	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

per letter of 7-15-97

Remarks: flood maps for
Gray
New Gloucester
Poland, Maine



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
159 HOSPITAL STREET
93 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0093

ANGUS S. KING, JR.
GOVERNOR

RONALD B. LOVAGLIO
COMMISSIONER

July 28, 1997

William M. Plumpton
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
P.O. Box 67100
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7100

Re: Environmental Assessment, Section 4(f) Statment, and Visual Assessment Route 26
Corridor, New Gloucester and Poland, Maine

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

I have searched the Natural Areas Program's Biological and Conservation Data System files in response to your request of July 15, 1997 for information on the presence of rare or unique botanical features documented from the vicinity of the towns of New Gloucester and Poland, Maine. Rare and unique botanical features include the habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered plant species and unique or exemplary natural communities. Our review involves examining maps, manual, and computerized records, other sources of information such as scientific articles or published references, and the personal knowledge of staff or cooperating experts.

Our official response covers only botanical features. For authoritative information and official response for zoological features you must make a similar request to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, 284 State Street, Augusta, Maine 04333.

According to the information currently in our Biological and Conservation Data System files, there are no rare botanical features documented specifically within the project area. However, a number of rare plants do occur outside of the project boundaries, and these species may also occur on the subject property if suitable habitat is available. I have included lists of rare and unique botanical features documented to occur in the towns of New Gloucester, Poland, and Raymond, as well as a rank explanation sheet for your reference. To ensure that such features are not inadvertently harmed, we suggest that you have the property inventoried by a qualified field biologist for rare or unusual plants, and natural communities.



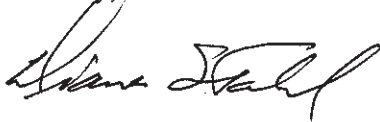
This finding is available and appropriate for preparation and review of environmental assessments, but it is not a substitute for on-site surveys. Comprehensive field surveys do not exist for all natural areas in Maine, and in the absence of a specific field investigation, the Maine Natural Areas Program cannot provide a definitive statement on the presence or absence of unusual natural features on this site.

The Natural Areas Program welcomes coordination with individuals or organizations proposing environmental alteration, or conducting environmental assessments. If, however, data provided by the Natural Areas Program are to be published in any form, the Program should be informed at the outset and credited as the source.

The Natural Areas Program has instituted a \$75.00/hour fee to recover the actual cost of processing your request for information. Please return the bottom of the invoice along with remittance to the Maine Natural Areas Program, 159 Hospital Street, State House Station #93, Augusta, Maine 04333.

Thank you for using the Natural Areas Program in the environmental review process. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions about the Natural Areas Program or about rare or unique botanical features on this site.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diana Stahl", written in a cursive style.

Diana Stahl
Data Specialist
Maine Natural Areas Program

Enclosures

SCIENTIFIC NAME.....	COMMON NAME.....	G-RANK	S-RANK	S-STAT	FED-STAT	HABITAT.....
SUBULARIA AQUATICA	WATER ARLWORT	G5	S2			Sandy or gravelly margins of lakes and slow streams
TRIPHORA TRIANTHOPHORA	NODDING POGONIA	G4	SIS2	T		Northern Hardwood (beech-birch-maple) forests, usually dominated by beech (Fagus grandifolia), often in deep litter.

SCIENTIFIC NAME.....	COMMON NAME.....	G-RANK	S-RANK	S-STAT	FED-STAT	HABITAT.....
AUREOLARIA PEDICULARIA	FERN-LEAVED FALSE FOXGLOVE	G5	S2			Dry deciduous woods and clearings
CALLITRICHE HETEROPHYLLA	WATER-STARWORT	G5	S1	E		Shallow pools and wet shores
ERAGROSTIS CAPILLARIS	TINY LOVE-GRASS	G5	S1	E		Dry sandy or rocky soils
ISOTRIA VERTICILLATA	LARGE WHORLED POGONIA	G5	SX			Acid or mediacid woodlands
PHEGopteris hexagonoptera	BROAD BEECH FERN	G5	S2			Rich woods
POTAMOGETON VASEYI	VASEY'S PONDWEED	G4	S1	E		Quiet muddy or calcareous waters
QUERCUS COCCINEA	SCARLET OAK	G5	S1	E		Dry light soil

SCIENTIFIC NAME..... COMMON NAME..... G-RANK S-RANK S-STAT FED-STAT HABITAT.....

AUREOLARIA PEDICULARIA

FERN-LEAVED FALSE FOXGLOVE

G5 S2

Dry deciduous woods and clearings

CASTANEA DENTATA

AMERICAN CHESTNUT

G4 S2S3

Dry gravelly or rocky, mostly
acidic soil

CYPRIPEDIUM ARIETINUM

RAW'S-HEAD LADY'S-SLIPPER

G3 S1 T

Damp or mossy woods or bogs

PERCHED HEMLOCK-HARDWOOD SWAMP

PERCHED HEMLOCK-HARDWOOD SWAMP

S2

MAINE NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM

STATE RANKS (S-RANK)

- S1 Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity (five or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because some aspect of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the State of Maine.
- S2 Imperiled in Maine because of rarity (6-20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- S3 Rare in Maine (on the order of 20-100 occurrences).
- S4 Apparently secure in Maine.
- S5 Demonstrably secure in Maine.
- SA Accidental in Maine, including species that only sporadically breed in Maine.
- SE An exotic species established in Maine; may be native elsewhere in North America.
- SH Occurred historically in Maine, and could be rediscovered; not known to have been extirpated.
- SU Possibly in peril in Maine, but status uncertain; need more information.
- SX Apparently extirpated in Maine (historically occurring species for which habitat no longer exists in Maine).
- S? Probably rare or historic in Maine, based on status elsewhere in New England, but not yet reviewed or documented by the Maine Natural Areas Program.

Note: "S-RANKS" determined by the Maine Natural Areas Program.

"G-RANKS" indicate global ranks as determined by The Nature Conservancy, and follow the criteria listed above for state ranks. For example, "G1" means 1-5 occurrences and critically imperiled throughout its entire range.

MAINE STATUS: PLANTS

NOTE: This column reflects State-listed status according to 5 M.R.S.A. § 13076-13079, which mandates the Department of Conservation to produce and biennially update the official list of Maine's endangered and threatened plants. The list is derived by a technical advisory committee of botanists who use data in the Natural Areas Program's database to recommend status changes to the Department of Conservation. The current official list is based on 1988 data, and bears a printing date of May 1990.

- E ENDANGERED SPECIES; represented in Maine by one recent (within the last twenty years) documented occurrence, or federally listed as Endangered (but see exceptions below).
- T THREATENED SPECIES; represented in Maine by two to four recent documented occurrences, or federally listed as Threatened (but see exceptions below).

Exceptions to the numerical criteria for these categories are small population sizes, confined to a small geographic area in Maine, and the taxon is clearly and imminently jeopardized.

FEDERAL STATUS

- LE Listed as Endangered at the national level.
- LT Listed as Threatened at the national level.

Please note that species names follow the 1995 *Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Maine*, 3rd revision, Josselyn Botanical Society of Maine, Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station, University of Maine, Bulletin 844.

Where entries appear as binomials, all representatives (subspecies and varieties) of the species are rare in Maine; where names appear as trinomials, only that particular variety or subspecies is rare in Maine, not the species as a whole.

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PAUL E. VIOLETTE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MARGARET A. TRUEWORTHY
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Maine Turnpike Authority

430 RIVERSIDE STREET
PORTLAND, MAINE 04103

August 27, 1997

William M. Plumpton
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
P.O. Box 67100
Harrisburg, PA. 17106-7100

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

I am writing in response to your letter of July 15 regarding the Route 26 Corridor study.

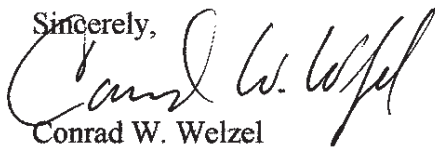
The Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) is continuing to monitor the Route 26 Corridor study and we are interested in being kept apprised of the developments as they occur. This study parallels with a current MTA study concerning access improvements in Gray, Maine.

We are in frequent contact with Ray Faucher of the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) about matters related to Route 26 from Gray north, and Ray is actively involved in our planning study. Continued sharing of information will benefit both studies.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input into this project. Our consultants have developed information from the Gray Study which you should feel free to request if you believe it would aid your efforts. We have also provided Ray Faucher a copy of the Draft Location Study Report for the Gray study.

Please contact Joe Grilli at HNTB (617-267-6710) or me for further information.

Sincerely,



Conrad W. Welzel
Government Relations

cc: Joe Grilli, HNTB



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September 22, 1997

William M. Plumpton
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
P.O. Box 67100
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7100

Dear Mr. Plumpton

We would like to thank you for attending our August 25, 1997 meeting of the Sabbathday Lake Association. I have received several comments that the opportunity to speak with both you and Ray Faucher was greatly appreciated and productive.

I think that your minutes of the meeting, dated September 3, 1997 adequately recaps the discussion that evening. I would like to take this opportunity to summarize the concerns that many Lake Association members have regarding construction of a new road or realignment of the existing road within the lake watershed.

The quality of the lake water is our primary concern. Studies have shown that a decrease in lake clarity can directly affect waterfront properties. The testing program that has been in effect for a number of years has shown that the dissolved oxygen at the bottom of the lake reaches zero in late summer and early fall. We see this as a warning that if something is not done about sediment and phosphorous export, oxygen levels will decline further possibly causing "China Lake Syndrome".

We understand that the MDOT will be obtaining the required environmental permits necessary for this type of construction. This will most likely include an analysis of the phosphorous increase and design of mitigating structures and sedimentation and erosion control measures during construction and long term stabilization of ditches and slopes to keep the increase to allowable levels.

The concern with the phosphorous calculations is that it allows for an increase in phosphorous export based on the land area. If a new road, off of the existing alignment, is built this could allow for a very large increase in total phosphorous export to the lake but would address the issue of proximity. Reconstruction of the road on the existing alignment may decrease total phosphorous export, if phosphorous control measures are included in the project, but the road would remain very close to the lake or tributaries in several locations.

Because Route 26 is one of the largest single phosphorous sources in the watershed, we would strongly encourage MDOT to design structures into the proposed road that will reduce, rather than limit, the increase in phosphorous and sediment export from the new and existing roadways included in this project.

Sincerely,



Norman G. Chamberlain, II
President, Sabbathday Lake Association

ROBERT F. FAUNCE

Land Use Planning
Environmental Permitting

P.O. Box 8129
Lewiston, Maine 04243-8129

(207) 784-2617

July 28, 1997

Mr. William Plumpton
Project Manager
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
P.O. Box 67100
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7100

Re: Route 26 Corridor Environmental Assessment
New Gloucester and Poland, Maine

Dear Mr. Plumpton:

This letter is in response to your July 15, 1997 letter to New Gloucester Code Enforcement Officer Bill Parquette regarding the proposed Environmental Assessment of the Route 26 corridor. In my position as Town Planner for New Gloucester, I offer the following comments for your consideration.

Social Environment

- What is meant by "displacements"? Does this refer to residences or businesses which may have to be moved to accommodate an alternative location for a portion of Route 26?
- Will the study estimate the proportion of current vehicle trips represented by commuters, trucks (especially interstate trucks servicing Poland Spring Bottling Company and the Jolly Farmer mulch operation), recreationists, local residents, etc.?
- Will your analysis of pedestrian and bicycle use be limited to existing conditions and current level of use only? Because of the current situation within the Route 26 corridor, I would expect that bicycle and pedestrian use is quite limited. I feel, however, that they could both greatly increase in the future if basic traffic safety, alignment and road shoulder issues can be adequately addressed.

I believe your study will find that a significant portion of vehicle trips within the corridor are for purposes related to day recreation and vacationing. There are several lakes and innumerable seasonal cottages within a few miles of the corridor as well as at least four nearby beaches open to the public. The

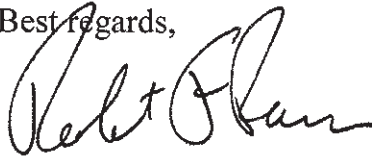
installation of safe bicycle facilities, such as paved shoulders, could dramatically increase pedestrian and bicycle use and even replace some vehicle trips.

Other Areas of Study

- Will you include an analysis of traffic safety conditions with regard to accidents, injuries and deaths and what changes might be expected from various project alternatives?
- Will you evaluate the existing roadway's impact on property values and local taxes? Specifically, I would be interested in estimates of how the issues identified in Project Needs adversely affect property values and tax income and how these might increase with improvements to the roadway.

I hope you find these comments useful. if you have any questions or wish to discuss any aspect of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Faunce', written in a cursive style.

Robert F. Faunce
Town Planner

J92002N.7G1



Growth Council of Oxford Hills

A Western Maine Economic Development Partnership

August 28, 1997

William M. Plumpton
Project Manager
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
PO Box 67100
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7100

RE: Route 26, Maine

Dear Bill:

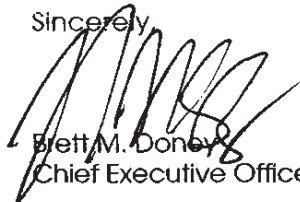
Thank you for your letter of 15 July and the opportunity to comment on the Route 26 Corridor Environmental Assessment.

I am writing in strong support of the proposed improvements to this section of Route 26. In your assessment, please note the critical importance of this corridor to the tens of thousands of residents of western Maine who rely on Route 26. The highway is the most important freight, commute, access and tourism route for our entire region. It carries a mix of Maine manufactured goods, retail freight, domestic and Canadian tourists, commuters and residents requiring access to the Maine Turnpike.

Given the critical importance of this portion of the National Highway System, our concern is that the much needed improvements are not delayed any longer. The specific realignment chosen is not of importance to us so long as it meets safety standards outlined in your letter. The existing condition is unacceptable. It is unsafe, hinders the flow of traffic and places the water quality of Sabbaday Pond at risk.

Please accept our commendation for the thoroughness of your study and your extensive public involvement effort.

Sincerely,



Brett M. Doney
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Cong. John Baldacci
John Melrose, MDOT Commissioner
Ray Glover, Route 26 Corridor Committee Co-Chair
Howie Munday, Route 26 Corridor Committee Co-Chair

VI. LIST OF PREPARERS

The following is a list of key personnel responsible for the preparation of the EA.

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James F. Linker, *Procedural Guidance / Document Review*

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Raymond E. Faucher, PE, *Project Manager*

Judith Lindsey-Foster, *Document Review*

Richard Bostwick, *Document Review*

Lisa Dickson, *Document Review*

Michael Morgan, *Traffic Data*

Eugene C. Uhuad, *Traffic Analysis*

Dale F. Doughty, *Hazardous Waste and Materials*

Sylvia Michaud, *Wetlands Compensation*

GANNETT FLEMING, INC.

William M. Plumpton, *Document Preparation*

Cyrille R. Whitson, CWD, *Natural Environment Studies*

Craig S. Shirk, *Natural Environment Studies*

Scott W. Duncanson, AICP, *Social Environment Studies*

Harvey S. Knauer, PE, PLS, *Air Quality and Noise Analysis*

John A. Ames, *Technical Editing and Document Layout*

Richard A. Pugh, CE, *Quality Assurance \ Quality Control*

Debra L. Plumpton, PG, *Geology and Groundwater*

Virginia G. Snead, *Surface Water Quality*

THE SMART ASSOCIATES, INC.

Glenn Smart, *Social Environment Studies*

Douglas Woodward, *Social Environment Studies*

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Christopher R. Bean, PE, *Development of Alternatives*

Roch D. Larochelle, *Development of Alternatives*

BARTON & GINGOLD

Arthur Gingold, *Public Involvement*

Terry Kincaid, *Public Involvement*

VII. REFERENCES AND LAWS

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